

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 12**  
**INCIDENT NO. 97-003**  
**DATE: January 23, 1997      TIME: 12:00 p.m.**

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Winter storms and blizzard conditions statewide.
2. DEATH AND INJURIES: An eight-car pile-up occurred January 23 on I-94 near the North Dakota Winter Show Building exit in Valley City, Barnes County. Early reports indicate several vehicles had occupants trapped inside. The extent of injuries is not known at this time.

The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) received additional reports of five people injured in vehicle accidents, resulting from icy and snowy road conditions and reduced visibility.

In Pembina County, a truck driver was injured during the January 22 blizzard when two semi tractor-trailers collided on the Drayton overpass on I-29. A snow plow escorted the ambulance to a Grand Forks hospital.

A motorist received minor injuries during a two-vehicle accident in Northwood, Grand Forks County. A snow-covered stop sign and icy conditions contributed to the accident.

Two people received minor injuries in a head-on collision in Rolette County on January 22. Icy conditions contributed to another injury accident that occurred on January 17 in Mountrail County.

3. DAMAGES: County and state officials are assessing the impact of the January 22 blizzard on transportation systems in the eastern third of North Dakota. Preliminary reports indicate that some roads that had been cleared were again blocked with snow.

The January 22 blizzard resulted in several reports of vehicle accidents, including one in which a semi tractor-trailer carrying cattle tipped over into a ditch on I-94, west of Valley City, Barnes County. The driver was not injured. However, officials were determining the number of cattle killed in the accident.

Because of the blizzard's whiteout conditions, county emergency managers postponed N.D. National Guard snow removal efforts until weather conditions improved on January 23. The N.D. Department of Transportation (N.D. DOT) also withdrew its crews from road clearing operations.

Cavalier County officials report the January 22 blizzard has been the worst the county has experienced thus far this winter season. Contributing factors include lack of visibility, high winds, coupled with sub-zero weather, and the deepest snow accumulations in 15 years.

A tractor-trailer hauling a caustic pesticide rolled over on U.S. Highway 2 near Michigan, Nelson County, during the January 22 blizzard. The road had been closed to traffic at the time of the accident. No one was injured, and no spillage of chemicals occurred.

The New Rockford airport in Eddy County will close until further notice because of lack of funds and personnel necessary to keep the runway open. The N.D. Aeronautics Commission reported more airports are considering taking similar action.

County emergency managers are reporting that repeated closures of businesses and government agencies are creating an economic hardship for hourly workers.

4. RESOURCES COMMITTED:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: No change from previous reports.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is scheduled on January 23 to open its Disaster Field Office (DFO) at 600 South Second Street, Bismarck. The telephone number is (701) 221-7700. The DFO will be staffed by FEMA and N.D. Division of Emergency Management staff and liaison personnel from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As previously reported, all state response operations will continue at the State EOC located at Fraine Barracks.

The N.D. Highway Patrol reported that I-94, I-29 and U.S. 2 were reopened the evening of January 22 after being closed for six hours. Motorists have been advised to use caution since some underpasses are reduced to one lane.

The N.D. DOT road crews are clearing the state highway system in eastern North Dakota, as weather conditions permit. Areas of concern include N.D. Highway 15, which is blocked in the Carrington area, Foster County. N.D. DOT resumed its snow removal efforts with 90 road crews working extended hours to obtain access on state and county roadways. Private contractors are clearing ditches along state highways.

National Guard crews resumed snow removal efforts on January 23 with 27 missions located in 18 counties. Of those missions, eight are staffed by U.S. Air Force personnel. At the time of the January 22 blizzard, the N.D. National Guard had completed 18 snow removal missions. Locations of completed missions are as follows: Adams, Burleigh, Foster, Kidder, LaMoure, Logan, McIntosh, Ransom, Richland, Stutsman and Ward Counties. Pending missions and new missions created by the storm will be prioritized by National Guard, Highway Patrol, N.D. DOT and N.D. Division of Emergency Management personnel. A combination of changes in the weather forecast, additional support requests and operator fatigue will increase the duration of missions.

The U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy emergency preparedness liaison officers met with Minot Air Force Base commanders on January 22 to ensure that the needs of the Air Force snow removal crews were being fulfilled and to evaluate equipment requirements.

Emergency medical and search and rescue missions were conducted in Nelson and Pembina Counties during the January 22 blizzard.

Rolette County issued an Emergency Declaration, bringing the total counties issuing declarations to 52. McKenzie County is the only county of 53 not issuing a declaration. Cities issuing declarations include Cleveland, Buchanan and Courtenay, bringing the total cities to 24. Three Indian Reservations have also issued declarations.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: A snow advisory was in effect January 23 for southeastern North Dakota. Light snow was spreading across the state and was expected to bring from three to five inches of new snow in all areas of the state, except the western third of North Dakota, where one to three inches was expected to fall. The National Weather Service predicts that cold Arctic air will push into North Dakota on January 24, causing blowing snow in open areas and making travel hazardous. Northerly winds were expected to gust from 15 to 30 miles per hour (mph) the evening of January 24.

The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports and photos of snow removal efforts are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>".

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Raymond J. Staiger, Acting State Director